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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/624,445

Applicant(s)

COX, ALAN

Examiner

ASHOK B. PATEL

Art Unit

2449

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 June 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1, 4-7 and 9-17 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2, 3, 6, and 18-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-30 are subject to examination. Claims 1, 4-7 and 9-17 have been cancelled.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 06/11/2009 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed 06/11/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for the following reasons:

Applicant's argument:

"In the Response to Arguments, the Examiner does not address the Applicant's arguments regarding Hickey and the "notifying" limitation. In particular, the Applicant argues that although the indicator of whether the message has been approved by another approver can be conveyed in a number of ways, the embodiment recited by claim 18 necessarily excludes doing so by accessing a common electronic mail box to evaluate the approved/rejected state of the e-mail, as taught by Hickey. Claim 18 does not recite using a common mail box. Claim 18 requires routing the electronic message (that is

Art Unit: 2449

intended for the first user) to the at least two approvers, which is substantially different from the system of Hickey.

Examiner's response:

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message" can be seen as an "improvement". Hickey teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Hickey discloses "A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail." (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.) Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Hickey.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Hickey provides the technique showing that

Art Unit: 2449

"once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.

Thus, the claimed invention would have been obvious to include "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Applicant's argument:

"In the Reasons for allowance, the Examiner cites Lu paragraphs [0022], [0023] and [0024] as teaching the "determining" limitation of claim 18. The Examiner specifically points to paragraph [0023] combined with paragraph [0022] (which describes human approvers) as implying that what is automatically configured may be done manually as well. However, paragraph [0023] of Lu only describes the use of a predetermined policy in connection with the automatic component of the screening:"

Examiner's response:

First of all, Examiner has never cited "In the Reasons for allowance".

Lu teaches:

[0022] Enabling screening of the electronic message by the supervisory recipient (step 220) may include reviewing the electronic message. Supervisory recipient 160 may be provided with a viewing screen having one or more control panels that allow supervisory recipient to approve or reject the electronic message for receipt by intended recipient 150.

[0023] The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked

Art Unit: 2449

senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. **Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.** Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.

[0024] Forwarding an approved electronic message to the intended recipient (step 230) generally includes automatically routing the electronic message to the intended recipient if the message is deemed acceptable for forwarding (in step 220). For example, sender 110 may be included on a list of approved senders. Conversely, if the message is not deemed acceptable for forwarding, the message may be refused (step 240). For example, the message may be refused by deletion of the message. In another implementation, the sender may receive or access a message indicating that the electronic message sent to intended recipient 150 was refused.

[0025] Refusal may occur after sender 110 is added to a list of senders whose messages are automatically refused. In yet another implementation, if a threshold number of electronic messages from a sender 110 are refused, the sender may be added to a list of senders to be refused or blocked and all further electronic messages from that sender 110 may be automatically refused or blocked, as appropriate."

As stated above the text of Lu's para.[0022], that underlined, teaches "by the at least one of the [human] approvers."

Lu teaches "a predetermined policy" at para.[0023], as stated by the same paragraph as being " The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message." followed by para.[0022]. **Thus, Lu implies that what is automatically configured not necessarily be configured to automatically screen" and be done manually as well.** The predetermined policy" is taught by Lu in the above paragraphs [0023]-[0025] is underlined.

Examiner's Note from the Applicant's response dated 08/06/2007:

"[i]t should be understood that the current invention is not limited to situations in which some form of synchronization is used or required."

"Nothing in the specification implies that synchronization is an essential element regarding notification. Nothing in the specification explicitly precludes other forms of notifying."

Art Unit: 2449

"Further, paragraph [0025] describes a child receiving notice when messages are rejected. The specification therefore clearly describes notification of electronic message status in forms other than through synchronization."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification of this application under examination in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art to use and/or make the invention.

Referring to claim 18,

The specification of this application under examination does not contain subject matter to implement limitations, "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as cited in Claim 18. Examiner has reviewed the specification of this application under examination and could not find support for the additional limitations as claimed.

Examiner is interpreting this limitation "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as stated in response dated 08/6/2007, clearly indicating that "Figs. 2A and 3A show the information presented to an approver. (paragraphs

Art Unit: 2449

[0032], [0050]). The information presented to the approver is updated when an electronic message is approved. (paragraph [0044]). Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the approvers are presented with the same information. (paragraph [0028]). Therefore, when one approver approves an electronic message, the other approver is notified of the approval by the fact that the electronic message is shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder. For the example given in the specification, the messages 230a and 230b are in the unapproved folder prior to approval in FIG. 2A, and are in the approved folder after approval in FIG. 2B. (paragraph [0044])."

Also, Examiner is also interpreting this limitation "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as it literally means..

Referring to claims 2, 3 and 19-24,

Claims 2, 3 and 19-24 are rejected for the reasons set forth for claim 18 as above, because of their dependency on claim 18.

Referring to claim 26,

The specification of this application under examination does not contain subject matter to implement limitations, "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as cited in Claim 18. Examiner has reviewed the specification of this application under examination and could not find support for the additional limitations as claimed.

Art Unit: 2449

Examiner is interpreting this limitation "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as stated in response dated 08/6/2007, clearly indicating that "Figs. 2A and 3A show the information presented to an approver. (paragraphs [0032], [0050]). The information presented to the approver is updated when an electronic message is approved. (paragraph [0044]). Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the approvers are presented with the same information. (paragraph [0028]). Therefore, when one approver approves an electronic message, the other approver is notified of the approval by the fact that the electronic message is shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder. For the example given in the specification, the messages 230a and 230b are in the unapproved folder prior to approval in FIG. 2A, and are in the approved folder after approval in FIG. 2B. (paragraph [0044])."

Also, Examiner is also interpreting this limitation "wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox" as it literally means..

Referring to claims 8 and 27-30,

Claims 8 and 27-30 are rejected for the reasons set forth for claim 26 as above, because of their dependency on claim 26.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

Art Unit: 2449

the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 2, 3, 8, 18, 23-25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1)

Referring to claim 18,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user (Fig. 1a, element 150) to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user (Fig. 1a, element 160, page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”);

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract,” A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.”)

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at

Art Unit: 2449

least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], "The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.")

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "For example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] "Supervisory recipient 160 may be provided with a viewing screen

Art Unit: 2449

having one or more control panels that allow supervisory recipient to approve or reject the electronic message for receipt by intended recipient 150.”,and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.”, Lu fails to teach “once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.”

Hickey teaches at para. [0015], “It is still a further aspect of the invention to provide an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.”)

Thus, Hickey teaches:

- 1) “a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications”,
- 2) “each member of group can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications satisfies the match criteria. The rules can

Art Unit: 2449

prescribe, for example, an automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox of the group electronic mailbox assigned to group."

The reasons why Hickey came up with this system and method is stated in para. [0007], "some group members may be deprived of information regarding the received e-mail message and the actions taken by the other group members in connection with the message. In addition, there is limited control on the flow, distribution and processing of the information intended to be shared among the members of group 22."

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox." can be seen as an "improvement". Hickey teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Hickey discloses "an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic

Art Unit: 2449

message from a common mailbox.”) Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Hickey.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known “improvement” technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Hickey provides the technique showing that “once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox. Thus, the claimed invention would have been obvious to include “provide an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses.

Referring to claim 23,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016] and [0017])

Art Unit: 2449

Referring to claim 24,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claim 25,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claims 2 and 3,

Lu teaches the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter, and the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter. (para.[0022]-[0024])

Referring to claim 8,

Lu teaches the method of claim 26, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user. (para. [0021])

Referring to claim 26,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

directing an electronic message to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message (page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”);

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract,” A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.”)

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], “The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110

Art Unit: 2449

and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.")and

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "or example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023], "Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu is silent in directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two approvers prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient " and ""once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox."

Hickey teaches at para. [0015], "It is still a further aspect of the invention to provide an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of

Art Unit: 2449

a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.”)

Thus, Hickey teaches:

1) “a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications”,

2) “each member of group can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications satisfies the match criteria. The rules can prescribe, for example, an automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox of the group electronic mailbox assigned to group.”

The reasons why Hickey came up with this system and method is stated in para. [0007], “some group members may be deprived of information regarding the received e-mail message and the actions taken by the other group members in connection with the message. In addition, there is limited control on the flow, distribution and processing of the information intended to be shared among the members of group 22.”

Art Unit: 2449

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox." can be seen as an "improvement". Hickey teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Hickey discloses "an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.") Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Hickey.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Hickey provides the technique showing that

"once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox. Thus, the claimed invention would have been obvious to include "provide an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses.

8. Claims 19-21 and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1) as applied to claims 18 and 26, and further in view of Bulfer et al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1) .

Referring to claims 19 and 20,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single

Art Unit: 2449

Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, Lu fails to teach the method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.”

(in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 21,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single

Art Unit: 2449

Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.” Lu fails to teach method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages

Art Unit: 2449

for a supervised user.” (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of “approval folder” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the “approval folder” by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claims 27 and 28,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], “In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child.

Art Unit: 2449

The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents

Art Unit: 2449

and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 29,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160."(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child.

Art Unit: 2449

The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to teach method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para. [0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable

Art Unit: 2449

to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

9. Claims 22 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1) as applied to claims 18 and 26, and further in view of Srivastava at al. (hereinafter Srivastava) (US 6,374,292 B1) .

Referring to claim 22,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para. [0021], " Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para. [0022] and [0023], " Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016]).

Lu fails to teach "message is being routed to a single folder."

Srivastava teaches at Fig. 3, element 408 and at col. 4, line 52 - 65, "In the described embodiment, the message store 304 is organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. The mailbox 401 is a container for messages where each user has an inbox 402 where new mail arrives, and can have one or more folders 404 where mail can be stored. Folders 404 may contain other folders or mailboxes and may be arranged in a hierarchical tree. Mailboxes owned by an individual user are private folders 406. In addition to a user owning a folder or a

Art Unit: 2449

mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408. A shared folder is similar to an email group, but instead of messages going into each member of the email group's inbox, messages addressed to the shared folder 408 go into a private folder associated with each user." ("message is being routed to a single folder.")

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "message is being routed to a single folder." can be seen as an "improvement". Srivastava teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Srivastava discloses "In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408."("message is being routed to a single folder." Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Srivastava.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Srivastava provides the technique of placing the message in the single folder that is " shared folder."

Referring to claim 30,

Art Unit: 2449

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para. [0021], " Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para. [0022] and [0023], " Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016]).

Lu fails to teach "message is being routed to a single folder."

Srivastava teaches at Fig. 3, element 408 and at col. 4, line 52 - 65, "In the described embodiment, the message store 304 is organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. The mailbox 401 is a container for messages where each user has an inbox 402 where new mail arrives, and can have one or more folders 404 where mail can be stored. Folders 404 may contain other folders or mailboxes and may be arranged in a hierarchical tree. Mailboxes owned by an individual user are private folders 406. In addition to a user owning a folder or a

Art Unit: 2449

mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408. A shared folder is similar to an email group, but instead of messages going into each member of the email group's inbox, messages addressed to the shared folder 408 go into a private folder associated with each user." ("message is being routed to a single folder.")

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "message is being routed to a single folder." can be seen as an "improvement". Srivastava teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Srivastava discloses "In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408."("message is being routed to a single folder.") Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Srivastava.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Srivastava provides the technique of placing the message in the single folder that is " shared folder."

Art Unit: 2449

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Bulfer et al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1), and further in view of Sherman et al (hereinafter Sherman)(US 2002/0194177 A1)

Referring to claim 18,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user (Fig. 1a, element 150) to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user (Fig. 1a, element 160, page 2, para.[0021], " Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.");

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract, " A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is

Art Unit: 2449

forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.”)

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], “The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.”)

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "For example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] "Supervisory recipient 160 may be provided with a viewing screen having one or more control panels that allow supervisory recipient to approve or reject the electronic message for receipt by intended recipient 150.", and [0023], "Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.", Lu is silent in "presenting a message in Approval folder" and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.."

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], "The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)."

Art Unit: 2449

And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. ("presenting a message in Approval folder").

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "display depicting approval folder" (Fig. 3) of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables the parents to individually (one or more supervisory recipients 160) bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

However, both references, Lu and Bulfer fail to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox."

Sherman teaches in Fig. 8A and 8B and para.[0059], viewing of listing of messages by folders. Also Sherman teaches the subfolder synchronization at para.[0065]. Also Sherman teaches that synchronization can be between server and any of the user devices at Fig. 4 at folder or subfolder level of the any of the folder level as depicted in Fig. 5. Sherman teaches at para.[0045], "The folder hierarchy illustrated in FIG. 5 represents a typical hierarchy that is created by the user on a server or desktop computer. When the user connects a companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the

Art Unit: 2449

entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder. That is, an "expanded" flag, which is set on a folder, pertains to the subfolder list of that folder and means that its subfolders will be synchronized. In this manner, the subfolders themselves are not necessarily individually marked in any way.", and at para.[0075], " In another example, a user may be provided with a GUI screen or other UI methodology to explicitly select subfolders that are to be excluded from the synchronization process."(notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the "folder" and/or "subfolder level" synchronization" for the mail objects on user owned PC and its companion devices (a companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder.) to the combined teachings of Lu and Bulfer such that the only required "folder" or "subfolder", such as Bulfer's "approval folder", can be synchronized among the various approval display devices used by more than one parent recipients of Lu.

The advantage is that one parent would immediately know what the other parent approved thereby not repeating the approval action.

Referring to claims 19 and 20,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], “In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, Lu fails to teach the method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be

Art Unit: 2449

deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.” (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply “account for parents” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the “approval folder” by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Art Unit: 2449

Referring to claim 21

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”)(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], “In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.” Lu fails to teach method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be

Art Unit: 2449

deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.” (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of “approval folder” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the “approval folder” by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are

Art Unit: 2449

forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 22,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”)(wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], “In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.” And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para.[0016]).

Lu fails to teach “message is being routed to a single folder.”

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By

Art Unit: 2449

activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.” (“message is being routed to a single folder.”)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply “account for parents”, “approval folder” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the “approval folder” by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 23,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016] and [0017])

Referring to claim 24,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claim 25,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claims 2 and 3,

Lu teaches the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter, and the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter. (para.[0022]-[0024])

Referring to claim 8,

Lu teaches the method of claim -1-524, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user. (para. [0021])

Referring to claim 26,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

directing an electronic message to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message (page 2, para.[0021], "Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.");

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract, "A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.")

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], "The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender

Art Unit: 2449

110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150."and

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "or example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu is silent in "presenting a message in Approval folder", directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two approvers prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient " and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the

Art Unit: 2449

electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox."

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." ("presenting a message in Approval folder" to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection"). Bulfer also teaches at para.[0023]," It is understood that the "reply to" field can be examined in addition to the sender field."(directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply "account

Art Unit: 2449

for parents", "approval folder", "presenting a message in Approval folder" and "examining reply to filed" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list and the approved messages can be sent by the child after examining "reply to" addresses which can also be added to the control list.

However, both references, Lu and Bulfer fail to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox."

Sherman teaches in Fig. 8A and 8B and para.[0059], viewing of listing of messages by folders. Also Sherman teaches the subfolder synchronization at para.[0065]. Also Sherman teaches that synchronization can be between server and any of the user devices at Fig. 4 at folder or subfolder level of the any of the folder level as depicted in Fig. 5. Sherman teaches at para.[0045], "The folder hierarchy illustrated in FIG. 5 represents a typical hierarchy that is created by the user on a server or desktop computer. When the user connects a companion

Art Unit: 2449

device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder. That is, an "expanded" flag, which is set on a folder, pertains to the subfolder list of that folder and means that its subfolders will be synchronized. In this manner, the subfolders themselves are not necessarily individually marked in any way.", and at para.[0075]," In another example, a user may be provided with a GUI screen or other UI methodology to explicitly select subfolders that are to be excluded from the synchronization process."(updating a display according to a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the "folder" and/or "subfolder level" synchronization" for the mail objects on user owned PC and its companion devices (a companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder.) to the combined teachings of Lu and Bulfer such that the displays of the only required "folder" or "subfolder", such as Bulfer's "approval folder", can be synchronized among the various approval display devices used by more than one parent recipients of Lu.

Art Unit: 2449

The advantage is that one parent would immediately know what the other parent approved thereby not repeating the approval action.

Referring to claims 27 and 28,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021], " Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], " The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a

Art Unit: 2449

delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to

Art Unit: 2449

the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 29,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021], " Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023], " Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to teach method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], " The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a

Art Unit: 2449

delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.” (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of “approval folder” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the “approval folder” by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve

Art Unit: 2449

it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 30,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para.[0016]).

Lu fails to teach "message is being routed to a single folder.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC

Art Unit: 2449

message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)."

And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." ("message is being routed to a single folder.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply "account for parents", "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved

Art Unit: 2449

messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Conclusion

Examiner's note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ASHOK B. PATEL whose telephone number is (571)272-3972. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30 am-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thu Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-6769. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2449

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/Ashok B. Patel/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2449